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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 10 October 1990, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. THOMPSON (Vice-President)	(Fiji)
later:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Vunibobo (Fiji)
Mr. Alleyne (Dominica)
Mr. Musa (Belize)
Mr. Koroma (Sierra Leone)
Mr. Traore (Mali)
Mr. Ndinga-Oba (Congo)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. VUNIBOBO (Fiji): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to add my own congratulations to you on your election to the prestigious office of President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. Malta, a small island State like my own, has played an important role in world affairs, far out of proportion to its size, and it is a tribute both to your country and to its people that one of its prominent sons should preside over this world Assembly. Your own record and accomplishments are well known and we look forward to a productive session under your leadership.

The past year has been a period of great accomplishments, in which the President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, Major-General Joseph Garba of Nigeria, played a prominent role. We would like to congratulate him on so skilfully fulfilling his responsibilities. The United Nations has come into its own, and Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar is to be congratulated on his outstanding contribution to this.

We would like to join other delegations in extending a warm welcome to Liechtenstein, which was admitted three weeks ago, and to Namibia, which joined the Organization in May. We were honoured to be among the group of sponsors for their admission. Our congratulations go to Germany for re-establishing its unity and national identity a few days ago.

On the subject of reunification, we welcome the dialogue between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Korea. We applaud the contacts between the Governments of North and South Korea. We urge that both sides be encouraged to join the United Nations, either individually or both at the same time. However, joining should not

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be conditional on the consent of either side. There have been enough instances to show that later unification is not precluded by initial separate membership of the United Nations.

Much has happened since the opening of the forty-fourth session of the Assembly. There has been an enormous upsurge of feeling towards greater freedom and openness in many countries where the State apparatus has, for over four decades, remained not merely as a formidable presence, but also as the sole arbiter of all that affects the lives of those concerned.

The ending of the cold war should herald more than the easing of tensions between the super-Powers. It is a golden opportunity to extend the basis of international reconciliation, including application of the peace dividend to combating poverty and underdevelopment. Like many other speakers, we hope that the arms control and disarmament resources which become available as a result of the reduction in military expenditure will be used to address the many and compelling urgent needs of the world's poor.

The expectation of a world in which there would be reduced tension and greater prospects for a more durable peace was shattered by the invasion of Kuwait. The unity with which the Member States acted to condemn the aggression and apply sanctions against Iraq has been unprecedented. The invasion of Kuwait is both an ominous phenomenon and a dangerous signal to the smaller States. We hope that the crisis now confronting the world can be defused without open hostilities and that the legitimate Government can re-establish its sovereignty in Kuwait.

The progress being made between the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Pretoria Government in South Africa, the agreement of the parties to the conflict in Cambodia to accept United Nations involvement, and the slow but steady forward movement in Western Sahara are all highly satisfactory signs of a new determination in the search for peaceful solutions to once-intractable problems.

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We subscribe to the widening international concern over environmental issues; it is high time. South Pacific peoples and Governments have, for two decades, strongly opposed the use of our region as a testing-ground for nuclear weapons by France. We are still firmly against such testing and would again call on, and indeed invite, France to cease this practice.

Recent action on reducing the use of ozone-depleting substances and the banning of drift-net fishing are important steps, but they must be built upon. Much still remains to be done. The effects of global warming, especially on low-lying island communities, must be seriously addressed. This state of affairs can be attributed to the excessive and uncontrolled practices of industrialized countries. Now, developing countries are being asked to bear a disproportionate share of the burden of overcoming this problem. For instance, we note with concern recent movements to boycott the purchase of tropical timbers. A number of developing countries derive a major portion of their income from this source and would be seriously disadvantaged. A strong case exists for some form of compensation to these countries to enable them to make up for the revenue forgone, as well as to assist them to carry out reafforestation programmes.

We in the South Pacific are alarmed at the intention of the United States to use the Johnston Island facility to destroy its stocks of chemical weapons, especially those that are being transferred from Europe. In addition to the fact that the movement of those stocks constitutes a danger, the potential consequences for our region are not sufficiently known or understood to justify the destruction process there.

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(Mr. Vunibobo, Fiji)

My Government supports recent initiatives towards the convening of an international conference on the Middle East. Such a conference should provide the basis for addressing long-outstanding problems afflicting the region, including a homeland for the Palestinian people and the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to an existence safe from threats to their territorial integrity. And here it would seem to us that, with its recent most commendable record of success, the key role should remain in the hands of the United Nations, under the distinguished and capable leadership of the Secretary-General.

Within the context of the global socio-political upheavals of the late 1980s, much of them based on a reawakening of indigenous consciousness and aspirations, we in Fiji have ourselves been going through a period of difficult readjustment. But, when seen within the broad sweep of global events, those in my country appear miniscule by comparison.

On 25 July last, a new Constitution was promulgated, the culmination of three years of patient effort by many people to devise a workable framework for constitutional progress. In bringing the Constitution into effect, President Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau said:

> "In the 20 years since independence, we have tried to build a multi-racial society which responded to the aspirations of all our citizens. Achieving the right balance was not easy. The main races formed two monolithic groups; there was little assimilation and much fear of domination. Divisions were deepened through contrasting cultural traditions and attitudes. Politics became polarized. There was the necessity to protect the special rights of the [indigenous] Fijians, who had become a minority in their land. At the same time, we had to take into account the legitimate interests of the other communities.

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"The Fijians had to preserve their identity, their culture and, sometimes it seemed, their very existence. Fiji was the only source of their culture and being. If they lost their identity and rightful position here, then what was left for them? Would they become yet another marginalized remnant of a once proud people?"

In terms of fundamental rights and freedoms, the President noted:

"The Constitution, therefore, places great emphasis on fundamental rights, freedoms and representation ... An elaborate Bill of Rights has been formulated and made part of the Constitution. The rights it protects are identical in all respects to those in the independence Constitution of 1970 ...

"The individual rights conform to all the major United Nations instruments relating to human rights protection. Among rights specifically guaranteed are the rights to life, liberty, security of the person, the protection of the law, freedom of conscience, of expression, assembly and association, protection for the privacy of house and other property and from deprivation of property without compensation. Every person in Fiji is entitled to these fundamental rights and freedoms, regardless of race, sex, place of origin, political opinions, colour, religion or creed."

The President concluded by saying:

"My message to all the citizens of our multi-racial country, with its numerous ethnic groups, is that Fiji is home to us all. Here, with compassion, understanding and goodwill, we can live together in happiness. We have made remarkable progress in social and economic reconstruction since 1987 through the co-operation of all the people. The promise of great prospertiy and national fulfilment is very close. Together we must continue to build Fiji, in peace and harmony."

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Our Constitution is the best practical solution, given the prevailing circumstances in my country. With goodwill from all, we believe that it can be developed to accommodate future changes. A review period of seven years has been included, which period will allow time to benefit from the working experience of the new Constitution.

We ourselves recognize that the way ahead will not be easy for our people. But the enormous reservoir of goodwill and respect that have characterized our collective approach to vicissitudes will be important assets as we move forward to consolidate the foundation which the new Constitution has laid down. And we would call on all friendly countries to assist and support us in this process so that the progress already made can be further strengthened.

Fiji and her peoples have undergone some traumatic changes over the past three years. We have been enormously encouraged and sustained by the understanding and support of many friendly countries. At the same time, we have been bewildered by the continuous sniping by a number of countries which, we would have thought, had greater appreciation of the difficulties our country was going through. Unfortunately, we have been sadly disappointed by both the lecturing and the posturing of a number of countries that appear to have arrogated to themselves the right to be moral and political arbiters of how we should conduct our affairs.

The world economy is at an important crossroad. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the future prosperity of most developing countries will depend on change, in many cases radical changes, in the willingness of the industrialized countries to take realistic steps to open up their markets. The developing countries must export to prosper, but they meet numerous hurdles in trying to gain access to the industrialized economies for many of their products. Although some progress has been made under the generalized system of preferences, three quarters

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of the dutiable exports of the developing countries do not enjoy preferential treatment. Non-tariff barriers remain a major impediment to freer trade. Subsidies paid by the developed countries to their own farmers seriously undermine the ability of the developing countries to gain more lucrative and stable markets. Statistics seem to show that one third of the exports of the developing countries to developed markets are affected and in some important groups of items the proportion goes as high as three quarters.

Looking closer to home, the island developing countries, of which my own country is one, and which are widely recognized as the most fragile and vulnerable of all the developing countries, find themselves in a particularly difficult position. There are over 20 island developing countries and Territories in the island Pacific subregion, very widely scattered over an enormous geographical area. Most of them are small and some are tiny, both in physical size and population, and natural disasters are a frequent occurrence. Four are within the category of least developed countries.

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Their links to the outside world are few and poorly developed and highly expensive to maintain, but without them they could not live. They are heavily dependent on outside sources for the supply of many essentials, having very few resources and a negligible productive capacity themselves. Many still have dominant subsistence sectors. Their small size and remoteness make them highly vulnerable to the forces of nature, and hurricanes occur frequently. A recent report of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has confirmed little or no growth in 1989 and 1990 for many Pacific island States because of devastation caused by hurricanes over the past year. The increasing attention being given to the small island nations and territories will, we hope, result in greater appreciation and support for their uniqueness.

In this regard we welcome the lead role which the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has taken recently in focusing on the specific characteristics and needs of the island developing countries. The highly useful collation of the features and characteristics of island developing countries which UNCTAD carried out last year was an important step forward, as was the UNCTAD meeting on island developing countries which was held in June last. We look forward also to seeing specific provisions included in the new arrangements which will be considered by UNCTAD VIII.

Having learned from past experience, Fiji is currently embarking on new economic policies which are designed to ensure that the difficulties of the 1980s are not repeated in the 1990s. A more outward-looking, trade-oriented approach to development has been adopted and the measures of protection and subsidy that were earlier intended to promote import substitutions are being dismantled. Export promotion through positive means has been introduced and is being vigorously implemented. We are dependent to a considerable degree on the preferences open to us in the developed countries, particularly those embodied in the South Pacific

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Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement with Australia and New Zealand - and we are deeply grateful for this particular contribution to our development - those of the United States under the generalized system of preferences, and those under the Lomé Conventions between the European Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. These have already resulted in some encouraging export successes and we anticipate significant new investment in Fiji as a consequence. Accordingly, we expect to earn our way primarily through our own efforts, as well as by capitalizing on the range of preferences available to us. It is axiomatic that these national programmes can succeed only within a supportive international trading environment, which we hope will be the rule rather than the exception in the decade of the nineties and beyond.

As we stand on the threshold of the third millenium, many forces and factors - social, economic and political - are converging to give new challenges and opportunities to the world community. What we do with those opportunities will become the basis of the heritage which we shall leave to the generations who succeed us. Let us not give them cause to regret their forebears.

Mr. ALLEYNE (Dominica): Permit me to congratulate you, Sir, and your country, Malta, on your election to the presidency of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. It is an honour which is richly deserved and which I am sure you will carry with due dignity and authority. I pledge the full support and co-operation of the Commonwealth of Dominica in this task. I also wish to take the opportunity of commending your predecessor for the quality of leadership he displayed during his term of office.

I feel deeply honoured and profoundly privileged to be making my maiden speech in the Assembly at a time when such significant and far-reaching changes are taking place, both in the world at large and in the Organization which brings together the

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leaders of the world in the critical task of securing international peace, security and development.

This final decade of the twentieth century is turning out to be one of the most turbulent in recorded history. Yet, in contrast to other periods of great and revolutionary change, many of the most far-reaching changes are taking place in an atmosphere not of violence and war, but of negotiation, conciliation and compromise. Whole systems, entrenched for half a century and more, are being examined and evaluated, often overturned and discarded, or at least radically reformed, but all from within, through a battle of intellect. The two great Powers of the century, which have expressed totally opposing ideologies and postures in the past, are now standing shoulder to shoulder and appear truly to be committed to co-operative action towards the ideal of international peace and security. That is truly a remarkable achievement for which much of the credit must go to the boldness, courage, perspicacity and perseverance of the President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, as well as to the open, constructive response of the West.

The Commonwealth of Dominica enthusiastically welcomes the fall of the Iron Curtain, the end of the cold war, the democratization and decolonization of much of Eastern Europe, and the new spirit of friendship and fraternity, communication and co-operation between East and West. We look forward to the day when the tremendous resources which have heretofore been tied up in the instrumentalities of hostility between those two great world blocs can be released and redirected to the effort to bring development, social justice and peace to the entire world. The existing inequalities in today's world, of extremes of wealth and wastefulness on the one hand and poverty and privation on the other, cannot be tolerated in this new world which is emerging in the twilight years of the twentieth century.

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While profound changes are taking place in the world, much remains unchanged. Many small States in the world continue to be highly vulnerable to external economic influences and to subversion from within and invasion and annexation from without. The Commonwealth of Dominica, as an extremely small State with experience of this vulnerability, is concerned that the international community must develop new approaches and new concepts for the protection of the security of small States and the preservation of the democratic process where these are threatened by elements hostile to the ideals of the United Nations.

In our region, recently in Trinidad and Tobago, virtually the entire Cabinet was taken hostage by a small band of disaffected terrorists who effectively paralysed the entire country and held its population to ransom because of their belief that they could solve the intractable problems of the third world, as manifested in Trinidad and Tobago, more effectively than could the incumbent, democratically elected, legitimate Government of that country. This action almost destroyed the social and political structure of that country and has certainly set back its economy several years. The ripple effect of this tragic event has had, and will continue to have, an impact on the economies of the other Caribbean States, including my own. My country highly commends Prime Minister A. N. R. Robinson and his Government and people for their courage in standing up to the threats - in some cases to their very lives - and in refusing to make concessions to these terrorists.

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The security of the States of the Caribbean region and of Central America is severely threatened by the scourge of international drug trafficking, which has become one of the most serious problems of the Caribbean region. The implications are obvious. The incredible financial resources of the Central American drug cartels, or for that matter of drug rings in many parts of the world, outstrip many times the financial resources of States. Experience has shown that, militarily, it would not take much to achieve the violent overthrow of the established order in these States of the region.

We want to take the opportunity to express our profound admiration for the courage and perseverance of successive Governments of Colombia in their fight against the scourge of drug trafficking. The international community, in our view, should give greater recognition to the sacrifices being made by the Government and people of Colombia, not only on their own behalf, but perhaps more particularly on behalf of the consumer nations of North America and Western Europe. The production and trafficking of narcotic drugs will not stop while the consumer nations are willing to buy the product at the prices which they are prepared to pay. Until we eradicate drug abuse from our societies, none of us can feel safe. Consumption must be more vigorously attacked, but, as well, the producer nations and their peasants must be enabled to earn a living through legitimate activities, the necessary supports for which must be provided in an appropriate manner.

We hold in the highest possible esteem, not only for ourselves but for peoples all over the world, the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the right of peoples to determine on the basis of their own free choice the destiny of their nation.

One of the most impressive events of the age is the manner in which the entire world community has come together in condemnation of the Iraqi invasion and annexation of Kuwait. That dastardly act has succeeded in unifying countries which

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have been bitter enemies, in defence of a common cause. However, the fact that almost the entire world can stand behind this common cause is itself a remarkable achievement. The Government and people of Dominica stand firmly behind the legitimate Government and the people of Kuwait, and while we cannot do much in practical terms, we have shown our solidarity by prohibiting all trade with Iraq and Kuwait while the occupation of Kuwait continues, and we express our readiness to comply fully with Security Council resolution 661 (1990).

We wish to reiterate here the importance of full respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and for the settlement of inter-State disputes without resort to the threat or use of force. We join our voice to the voices of those many States in demanding that the Government of Iraq immediately cease its aggression against the legitimate Government and people of Kuwait, and withdraw all its military personnel from the territory of that State.

We welcome recent progress towards a negotiated settlement of the situation of Cambodia, directed towards enabling the Cambodian people to determine their own political future through free and fair elections organized and conducted by the United Nations in a neutral political environment with full respect for the national sovereignty of Cambodia. We express the hope that the spirit of constructive compromise will prevail and that the people of Cambodia can soon effectively express their will in relation to the governance of their country.

The progress of Namibia towards independence and democracy is a matter of deep gratification for the Commonwealth of Dominica and for the Organization. The world community must continue to support that country as it builds its institutions and exercises its independence in the years ahead.

The new effectiveness of the United Nations, evidenced by all these developments, is to be noted with deep satisfaction.

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The rapprochement between East and West; the end of the cold war; the new emphasis on development rather than ideology, have enabled the United Nations after all these years at last to begin to play the constructive role in the maintenance of international peace and security that it was established to play. The Security Council, in particular, has been able to achieve a truly remarkable level of unanimity and constructive action on such critical issues as the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the embargo of Iraq and Kuwait sanctioned by the United Nations, and the United Nations efforts in assisting the refugees created by that conflict.

The new spirit of co-operation which has emerged between the super-Powers in the last several months has enabled the United Nations, at last, to begin to fulfil the mandate of its Charter.

Perhaps this new spirit of co-operation will make possible a negotiated settlement of other issues in the Middle East. I am referring, in particular, to universal recognition of the right of Israel to exist within settled and secure borders, as well as of the right of the Palestinian people to a homeland of their own. Recent developments in the Middle East may present new opportunities for a satisfactory settlement of these intractable problems. Every opportunity must be seized to achieve comprehensive peace and stability in that region.

The unification of Germany and the liberation and democratization of much of Eastern Europe carry tremendous prospects for the future. However, many of these emergent democracies will require assistance in their effort to transform their societies from politically controlled and economically planned societies into market economies and open, democratic societies. We whole-heartedly encourage the international community to lend every support to these efforts. We equally emphatically assert, however, that assistance to the emergent democracies of Eastern Europe should not be at the expense of traditional - and already inadequate - levels of assistance to the developing countries, which have been the

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traditional recipients of development assistance. We urge the international community, and more particularly the industrialized nations of the world, to seek out and identify creative ways to divert the tremendous resources, both human and financial, which have heretofore been poured into sustaining a non-productive cold-war effort into a new drive for the development of the developing countries of the world. We need now to see a rationalization of the use of the world's resources: an application of those resources to bring about an acceptable level of international economic justice. The developing world must be helped to break out of the cycle of poverty and deprivation which has persisted for so many years, to escape the humiliating dependency which we now suffer, and to be able at last to stand on our own feet in meeting the essential needs of our peoples. This, however, will never happen as long as the relationship between the rich and poor nations, and the trading patterns which exist today, persist as the basis of our existence. And, of course, so long as there is no justice there will be no peace.

Much progress has been made in South Africa in the last 12 months in breaking the grip of apartheid, that inhuman and abominable system for the oppression and exploitation of man by man. The entire world community has long abhorred this abomination, but many countries have been unwilling to do anything about it anything, that is, that would effectively break the stranglehold of the power structure and secure the eradication of that horrendous imposition on the fundamental human rights of millions of black, coloured and Asian South Africans. Now, through the struggles of the South African peoples themselves, supported and given heart by the unwavering solidarity of many nations represented here; through the shedding of their blood and the sacrificing of their liberty; through their persistence in confronting the injustice of apartheid even at the greatest imaginable risk; through the boldness of children and the fortitude of women, it begins to appear that justice, after all, can prevail. There begins to appear a

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glimmer of light at the end of the dark tunnel. In this connection, I cannot avoid mentioning Nelson Mandela, a man who, even as he has faced the challenges and grappled with the problems of the new South Africa into which he has been at last released after 27 years of imprisonment, has demonstrated the depth of wisdom and the strength of his character, uncompromising in principle but remarkably flexible in his approach, a man of great vision, who is prepared to sacrifice all of himself, as he has incontrovertibly demonstrated, for the good of his people and for the triumph of justice. I salute this great hero of the twentieth century, whose greatest virtue is his humanity, whose wit and sense of humour, tolerance and love, have survived the greatest imaginable odds, and who has emerged smiling and brilliant, challenging the assumptions on both sides of the battle and opening up ways towards a solution.

Doubtless, some of those who have sanctified him while he was in prison will criticize him now that he is grappling, in an entirely principled but pragmatic fashion, with the very real problems of negotiating transition to majority rule while preserving the country - not the structures of apartheid - from a possible collapse into chaos and anarchy. The course he has navigated is a very difficult one, fraught with hazards and obstacles. It requires a giant such as Mandela is, with the wisdom, integrity, tolerance and courage which he has acquired over many years of struggle, to prevail.

(Mr. Alleyne, Dominica)

We are confident that under such leadership the people of South Africa shall overcome. In the mean time the pressure for real progress must be maintained. The Commonwealth of Dominica has heeded the call of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and appeals to all the nations of the world that are concerned about human rights and are committed to the objectives of the Charter of the United Nations to maintain economic and other sanctions against South Africa until real and irreversible progress has been made towards the goal of "one person, one vote" in South Africa.

The Commonwealth of Dominica is committed to eradicating nuclear weapons and other instruments of mass destruction from the face of the Earth. To that end we have ratified the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty and are negotiating a safeguard agreement. We have supported the initiative to declare the Caribbean region a nuclear-free zone and urge that that concept should be perpetuated and disseminated over an ever-increasing area of the world's surface. The Commonwealth of Dominica urges the international community to work vigorously towards nuclear non-proliferation and the eventual total abolition of all nuclear and chemical weapons.

Too many nations spend too high a proportion of their national wealth on armaments. Even poor, developing countries spend millions of dollars on armaments at the expense of the development of even basic amenities for their peoples. It would be naive to hope for the elimination of expenditure on armaments. However, the world should apply its best efforts to minimize expenditure on destructive weaponry and apply our talents and resources instead to development, peace and justice.

We have noted with satisfaction the reunification of Germany, and in our region the four Windward Islands of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States are working vigorously towards the establishment of a unified State made up of

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those four separate and independent States. In that context, we note with satisfaction the recent efforts which indicate a new seriousness in the approach of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the issue of the reunification of Korea. We realize that there are many difficulties in the way of that process of reunification. We affirm our full support for the objective shared by both North and South Korea that their country be reunited. At the same time, we do not share the view that the process towards unification should stand in the way of United Nations membership for the Republic of Korea or for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, if they desire it. We note that separate membership in the United Nations did not prevent or in any way retard the progress of East and West Germany towards reunification. North and South Yemen were not obstructed in any way by separate membership of the United Nations in their drive to unify their country. We in Dominica, Grenada, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will not allow separate representation in the United Nations to stand in the way of our unification.

If the Republic of Korea, an independent sovereign State, seeks membership in the United Nations and is willing and able to carry out all the obligations of a Member State in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations - as we have no doubt it is - the Commonwealth of Dominica will support its application for membership.

Reverting to the Caribbean region, I wish to touch upon the traumas being suffered by the people of our sister State of Haiti. Liberated from the brutal dictatorship of the Duvalier régime, the country now finds it difficult to break out of the dictatorship of terror that appears to be so much a part of Haitian life. Haiti appears to be in a perpetual see-saw of rising hopes and dashed dreams, to such a point where one wonders at this stage whether cynicism has overcome hope. But it is said that "hope springs eternal in the human breast", and

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while it is for the people of Haiti to work out their destiny, surely it is for their neighbours and the international community to lend appropriate encouragement and support to the efforts of the local population.

The cycle of violence and terror that has dominated the life of Haiti for such a long time must be broken. We endorse and support United Nations initiatives to contribute to the organization of free and fair elections in that country, so long deprived of the opportunity to attend seriously to the legitimate needs of its people in an atmosphere of peace and security. Indeed, we urge the United Nations to place much greater emphasis on this problem and not to treat it as merely peripheral.

Lastly, on a more positive note, the Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica has, over the years, been developing and implementing a very comprehensive programme to promote the prudent use of natural resources for social and economic advancement. Such a programme is of critical importance in an island setting with fragile ecosystems, limited physical conditions and pressures from competing interests for scarce land resources.

Recent developments on the global level have prompted my Government to pursue its environmental management programme with much urgency and commitment. Issues such as global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, tropical deforestation, inadequate housing and poverty are seen as matters to be tackled immediately while searching continuously for long-term solutions.

In an effort to diversify the nation's economy, tourism has been given greater priority and Dominica is being promoted abroad as the "nature island". Indeed, our small nation is very rich in natural and cultural resources which are found nowhere also. Dominica has an abundance of forests, wildlife, rivers, lakes, waterfalls and sulphur springs. Such outstanding natural features are complemented by numerous historical sites and archaeological features. It is logical, therefore,

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that the development and promotion of those resources must be carried out with the highest regard for environmental consequences, in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development.

The Government of Dominica has embarked on a systematic approach to sustainable development. One important component of that programme is the setting up of forest reserves and national parks. Today 20 per cent of the total land area of Dominica has been legally declared either forest reserves or national parks. The forest and park systems plan has identified other areas for inclusion, but the present system consists of two forest reserves and two national parks. Those forest reserves and parks and the resources found in them provide the base for the development of tourism on the island. Therefore our concept of tourism calls for environmental protection and enhancement.

The Commonwealth of Dominica takes pride in the fact that its citizens today enjoy clean air and water and an environment relatively free of most of the problems faced in other parts of the world. We are well aware, however, that those conditions are not likely to exist much longer if the present indiscriminate and world-wide destruction of the environment continues.

While recent approaches to environmental questions by the industrial nations give reason for hope, the international community needs to commit greater resources to the eradication of practices that result in the pollution of our rivers and atmosphere, the depletion of our forests and the indiscriminate discharge of industrial wastes into the oceans of the world. After all, we must be guided in the end by the proposition that we are mere trustees of this Earth and we should endeavour to pass it on to future generations in a condition which will allow them to enjoy the full gifts of nature.

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The recent World Summit for Children affords us the opportunity to reflect on the impact of the issues of drugs, war, justice, development and the environment on the children and therefore on tomorrow's world. We must take up the challenge and seize the opportunity today if we are to escape the harsh judgement of tomorrow's history.

I wish the United Nations continued growth in influence and effectiveness as it seeks to respond to the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Mr. MUSA (Belize): The work of this Organization over the past year has heightened the reality of the United Nations as a dynamic, credible and strong institution that is responsive to the new challenges facing the international community. We are particularly impressed by the conclusions reached at the special sessions of the General Assembly on apartheid, the international fight against drugs, international economic co-operation and the plight of refugees, and more recently by the effective measures taken by the Security Council on the crisis in the Gulf.

Against that backdrop, the delegation of Belize is heartened at your election as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. We wish you well and assure you of our co-operation in your challenging task.

(Mr. Musa, Belize)

Your appointment can without a doubt be regarded as a tribute to Malta, with which we share a Commonwealth heritage and membership of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Malta is an example to the the smaller States within this Organization, and its importance has been noted in its delegation's ardent efforts on issues such as aging, the protection of the environment and the promotion of the concept of the common heritage of mankind. Your own accomplishments, Mr. President, and your special concern for human rights, stand you in good stead to steer the Assembly through the current session.

I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation to Major-General Joseph Garba for his accomplishments during the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly. Allow me to pay a deserved tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose dedication and energy continue to inspire us.

My delegation welcomes the Principality of Liechtenstein to the family of nations, and looks forward to an increasing role for the smaller States in our quest for global harmony.

This session of the General Assembly takes place at an extraordinary time for the world. The crisis of the past few months in the Persian Gulf brings home forcefully the realization that peace is more than the absence of war. The easing of East-West tensions and the arms control agreements between the super-Powers brought a new hope for peace and a high degree of optimism. The end of the cold war coincided with an irresistible wave of human freedom sweeping across many continents, but the semblance of peace was shown to be structured in a fragile framework.

The United Nations was created at San Francisco after the Second World War for the express purpose of maintaining international peace and security. Chapter VII of the Charter contains a blueprint for an international security system with an enforcement capacity to deter aggression and prevent local disputes from erupting

(Mr. Musa, Belize)

into armed conflict. Had it been implemented, it could have gone a long way towards establishing the rule of law world wide, and saving the world both from the scourge of war and from the waste of resources on the instruments of war. But the Charter's promise was not kept.

Some years ago, the Independent Commission on International Security Issues - the Palme Commission - recommended a structure for preventive peace-keeping, involving fact-finding missions and military, collective security forces, all to be deployed in advance of armed conflict. Is it not time for us to re-examine these proposals, and move to strengthen the United Nations security system? The recent events are a chilling reminder that even in these times of apparent peace, small, vulnerable States must be on guard to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

We cannot condone the invasion of Kuwait, whatever the pretext for it. Aggression cannot be tolerated. The use of force to settle differences cannot be permitted. The international stand taken against the Iraqi aggression, the imposition of sanctions, is logical and imperative. At the same time, we support the efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis in the Gulf which would result in the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. This crisis dramatizes the crying need for peace and justice in the entire Middle East. Cannot this crisis be converted into an opportunity for a comprehensive peace settlement?

The Arab-Israeli conflict, with the struggle of the Palestinian people for justice and their right to self-determination and independence at its core, has rightly been an issue of central concern to the entire international community. The implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions, which would guarantee independent statehood to the Palestinians and also Israel's security, must be the objective of a United Nations sponsored international conference.

(Mr. Musa, Belize)

Belize also reaffirms its full solidarity with Lebanon in that country's legitimate demand for the unconditional withdrawal of all occupation forces. We must bring an end to the senseless bloodshed in that ravaged country.

Belize avails itself of this opportunity to welcome Namibia's membership of the United Nations. We salute the leaders of Namibia and the crucial role of the United Nations in the negotiating process that led to Namibia's independence.

My delegation also welcomes Mr. Nelson Mandela back into the world of struggle for the liberation of his people. We reaffirm our support for the international community's maintaining a firm stand against the South African racist régime until apartheid is eliminated and the majority of the South African people can exercise their basic right to equal opportunities and equal participation in the political process.

A few days ago, we witnessed the unification of East and West Germany. This remarkable transformation evolved through the will and the work of the people of Germany. We wish the new State well, and anticipate that this move will usher in a period of reconciliation, peace and co-operation in line with a new world order.

Unified Germany should be an inspiration to the people of the Korean peninsula in their search for mutual confidence as a means to resolve an ideological dispute, to the benefit of mankind.

In our own region, Belize applauds the elections and peaceful transfer of power in Nicaragua as a significant step in the resolution of the conflict in that country, and in Central America as a whole. The former President of Nicaragua, Mr. Daniel Ortega, and President Violetta Chamorro have made an invaluable contribution to the cause of peace in that troubled region. We are of course aware that many problems still remain in establishing democracy and in national reconciliation.

(Mr. Musa, Belize)

The situation in El Salvador continues to be of concern, enmeshed as the country is in a civil war in which there can be no winners. Peaceful dialogue, respect for human rights and the rule of law are the essential ingredients for a just and lasting peace for the people of El Salvador.

The search for a democratic path in Haiti continues. The holding of national elections and the establishment of institutions committed to the democratic process are the objectives to which Belize, as a member of the Carribean Community (CARICOM), is committed to assisting in every way possible. The Prime Minister of Belize has been personally engaged in this endeavour, along with former United States President Carter. It is our hope and prayer that the people of Haiti will be allowed to emerge from the long night of terror and tyranny into a dawn of peace, justice and freedom.

We turn now to the problem of refugees in Central America. Refugees and displaced persons remain a humanitarian problem of herculean magnitude. For this reason, the Belize delegation recalls with satisfaction the successful meeting earlier this year of the Follow-Up Committee of the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA). We commend the efforts of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as the pledges of the international donor community, in response to the needs of our societies, affected by the thousands of refugees who have come to our shores in search of peace and in hope of a better life. We ask for the continued co-operation of the international community in dealing with this phenomenon, whose social impact on small countries such as Belize can be devastating, unless addressed in a timely and constructive manner.

(Mr. Musa, Belize)

Promoting peace and economic development is still the challenge we face. We meet in the shadow of the Gulf crisis with its attendant economic uncertainties caused by the heavy increases in fuel prices. We meet as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reports that over a billion of our fellow human beings live in absolute poverty, that nearly 900 million adults are unable to read and write and that 40,000 children who could be saved die every day in our world because of underdevelopment and poverty. In many countries in Africa and Latin America the 1980s have witnessed stagnation, or even reversal, in human achievements. With the decline in commodity prices and the continuing high prices for manufactured goods and oil, the inevitable result is the worsening unequal exchange affecting most of the third world.

It has been rightly said that true development should be measured not by growth rates but rather by what has been termed the quality of life. The decade of the 1990s must focus on human development, particularly in the least developed and developing countries. Belize subscribes to the view that human freedom is vital for human development; that people must be free to exercise their choices; that the process of development must create an environment in which people individually and collectively may develop their full potential and have a reasonable chance of leading productive and creative lives. The challenge we face is to manage economic growth, to make better use of our human resources, to develop the productive sector of the economy while addressing the basic needs of our people for food, water, education, housing, health care and, of equal importance, the creation of jobs - the assurance of human dignity.

The primary responsibility for attaining those objectives is ours; but a favourable external environment is vital for the support of human development strategies for the 1990s. In the words of Barber Conable, President of the World Bank:

(Mr. Musa, Belize)

"increased flows of financial development assistance are needed if developing countries are to succeed in implementing poverty reduction strategies. Official aid flows have fallen as a percentage of industrial countries' gross domestic product, just as the need has been most acute. This is unacceptable."

Technical co-operation from our partners in development must be restructured if it is to help build human capabilities and national capacities. As the UNDP report for 1990 points out, in many developing countries the amount of technical assistance flowing each year into the salaries and banks of foreign experts far exceeds the national civil service budgets. More successful technical co-operation in the 1990s requires that programmes should focus more on national capacity-building - through the exchange of experience, the transfer of competence and expertise and the fuller mobilization and use of national development capacities.

This development challenge has become all the more pressing in many of our societies because of the scourge of drugs. The demand for, production of, traffic in and illicit consumption of narcotics threaten the physical health of people and the political, economic, social and cultural structures of nations. Belize is deploying a major effort, in collaboration with neighbouring States, such as Mexico, and all friendly Governments, to eliminate this serious threat to our societies.

The development challenge of the 1990s brings with it the clear realization that sustainable development must be perceived as a matter of global ecological security. In 1992 the world community will convene in Brazil to discuss environmental concerns. We look forward to the adoption of a global plan of action to reverse the degradation of the environment and ensure its preservation.

(Mr. Musa, Belize)

In Belize our Government and people share a firm commitment to protecting our forests, our wildlife, our coral-reef system and our natural resources for generations of Belizeans yet unborn. But there are new challenges to our environment which require attention and assistance. There is, for instance, the phenomenon of rapid urban development, which demands new and innovative strategies and resources to deal with the issues of water and sewerage, garbage collection, sanitation, slum clearance, housing development and urban planning with proper amenities for healthy living. The effectiveness of Government responses and municipal action to these issues will largely determine human development in our growing cities of tomorrow.

We are encouraged by the political resolve of the world community to give children a better future. The recently concluded World Summit for Children has provided a fresh impulse to press for the goals of adequate nutrition, primary health care and basic education for all our children in the decade ahead. These may not be the issues that attract headlines in our newspapers and electronic media, but they are no less deserving of our highest priority. It is this investment today that will determine tomorrow's future.

Life in the twenty-first century for our children and future generations will be determined by how we can best manage to overcome the challenges of our time. The young people of today do not understand the logic of war. We can learn a great lesson from them and give peace a chance. This is our hope and prayer.

Mr. KOROMA (Sierra Leone): It is a privilege for me to be participating once again in the work of the General Assembly, and it gives me great pleasure to extend to you, Sir, the congratulations of my delegation on your unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. This is a well-deserved recognition of your many qualities as a national and international statesman.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

I should like also to pay tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Garba, for the exemplary and commendable manner in which he guided the deliberations of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth regular session and also the three special sessions devoted to apartheid, illicit narcotic drugs and international economic co-operation. To him we express our appreciation.

We once again pay tribute to the United Nations, and in particular we commend the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his untiring efforts in the pursuit and achievement of peace in many troubled parts of the world. We congratulate him on his recent successes, particularly for his role in the smooth transition of Namibia to independence.

The admission of new Members to the United Nations is always a major achievement, for it brings the universality of the Organization - a primary objective of the Charter - even closer. With the membership of the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Republic of Namibia, the primacy of the United Nations as a force in international relations is once more reinforced. We welcome them among us and look forward to their contribution in addressing the important tasks that lie ahead.

Namibia's independence does not, however, close its difficult history, for decades of pillaging have left that country's economy in desperate need of assistance. We are hopeful that such assistance will be forthcoming to ensure that the fruits of independence and sovereignty are not in any way compromised by economic instability. This is the continuing obligation which the international community must now discharge.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

The winds of change which started in Eastern Europe a year ago culminated on 3 October with the reunification of the German States. The crumbling of the Berlin Wall and the act of reunification have effectively pulled down the iron curtain that was the dominant political factor of post-war Europe. Sierre Leone welcomes this momentous occasion, which is indeed the culmination of the historic desire and the untiring efforts of the German people themselves to reunite their homeland. Like many of the events of 1989 in Europe, German reunification symbolizes the triumph of the human spirit over artificial, and sometimes evil, forces that negate its full expression. Germany in the future will, we believe, be a force for stability and progress in a world much of which has been ravaged by conflict, poverty, disease, neglect and prejudice.

This development opens new horizons for understanding and co-operation among nations and reaffirms the belief of my delegation that Korea, like the two Germanys and the two Yemens, can seek membership of this Organization without prejudice to the desire of its people for the reunification of its homeland. Sierre Leone therefore expresses its support for the desire of the Republic of Korea for membership of the United Nations. We commend the efforts of the two Governments and, in particular, the recent meeting of the Prime Ministers of North and South Korea - an event which is bound to lead to a lessening of tensions between the two countries.

As the frontiers of political change are broadened, so are we hopeful that before long apartheid South Africa will itself experience this metamorphosis. The Sierra Leone delegation continues to observe closely developments in that country following the release of the Vice-President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), Mr. Nelson Mandela, with the hope that the trend will be allowed to gather its natural momentum. The dialogue between black organizations

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

and the South African Government should be actively encouraged so that positive results can be realized.

Situations that threaten this prospect should be avoided. The ongoing violence in the townships raises alarming fears - fears that the sinister agency behind this murderous upsurge has mapped out an agenda which, by creating unrest and fanning the flames of rivalries, is committed to mortgaging South Africa's peaceful and democratic future to a retention of the present untenable status quo. It requires no exceptional premonition to discern that the greater good of all South Africans cannot be assured in an atmosphere that pits brother against brother. President F.W. de Klerk has shown tremendous foresight, sincerity and courage, and now he has the opportunity of demonstrating his commitment to irreversible political change by firmly arresting the violence and restoring law and order.

With respect to the situation in Western Sahara, my delegation has consistently supported the joint efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to secure a resolution of the conflict by ensuring the full exercise by the people of their right to self-determination. As the Secretary-General observes, it is now necessary to guarantee the success of these modalities, already agreed upon, in order to provide for an early referendum in the territory. We hope that, in keeping with the plan already approved by the Security Council, the parties to the conflict will continue to be amenable to the measures that have been taken in this direction.

The tragic situation in the Republic of Liberia must attract the attention of the international community. The Foreign Minister of the Republic of the Gambia has already given a detailed account of the tragedy which gave rise to an initiative by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to put an end

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to the carnage and destruction in that country. This plan, in my delegation's view, offers the best hope for peace and stability in Liberia and deserves the support of all peace-loving States.

The key elements of the plan address the fundamental issues, namely, the establishment of a cease-fire, monitoring of the cease-fire, setting up of an interim administration and the conduct of free and fair elections to be monitored by international observers. The plan also stipulates that whoever heads the interim administration cannot be a candidate for the presidency.

These proposals have been accepted at a conference of political parties and interest groups which was convened in the Republic of the Gambia. The suffering and misery of the Liberian people engendered by this conflict has few parallels in modern African history. The displacement of whole families, and even whole communities, in a once peaceful and stable nation has created a massive refugee problem that has imposed tremendous stresses on the economies of neighbouring countries. Much of this may be unknown to the international community and, consequently, lost on the conscience of many. It is for this reason, and many more, that we commend the ECOWAS plan for support by this Organization.

As the world continues to be energized by the exciting politics of change, the quest for a durable solution of the question of Palestine becomes imperative. The lessening of tension in that region has now acquired an urgency, within the context of a Palestinian homeland and mutual security assurance for all States.

The international conference on the Middle East should be convened to consider problems pertaining to the region and, in particular, the solution to the Palestinian question.

The situation which has been brought about in the Persian Gulf as a consequence of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait is both dangerous and unfortunate - dangerous, because it now threatens to plunge that region once again into a

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

conflict of major dimensions, and unfortunate in its cold-war context. For Iraq's aggression is at variance with the Charter's provisions and the freshening wind of political change sweeping across the world. It threatens to pull us back into the abyss of tension and militarism from which we are so slowly emerging. My Government has publicly declared its condemnation of Iraq's action and called for its immediate withdrawal from Kuwaiti territory. We do so again from this podium. Our support for the Security Council's handling of this crisis remains firm, as does our conviction that the purported annexation of Kuwait should not be allowed to succeed.

The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force is still a fundamental corner-stone of international law and respect for it becomes even more compelling in the evolving climate of mutual understanding and accommodation in which we all have a stake. The Sierra Leone delegation believes that a peaceful resolution of the present situation is still within reach, and that bringing this about should remain the task of the United Nations. However, whatever the coming weeks may bring, the resolve of the international community should be steadfast and the restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity is an objective from which we cannot deviate.

The Secretary-General observes in his report that the problem of Cyprus has not shown any movement in the negotiating process as was anticipated last year, while the situation on the island continues to deteriorate. Over the years, my Government has stressed the necessity for both Cypriot communities to approach all the issues with frankness and determination for compromise. Though the road to reconciliation may be rocky, it is the only one that can be taken. Rebuilding confidence and trust is important in this journey which, we hope, will eventually lead to a comprehensive solution.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

The recent World Summit for Children deserves some comment, inter alia, for its remarkable organizational success and for its substantive achievement. It underlines the fact that the world is now truly a global village where rapid and enduring solutions to problems require the widest possible consensus and commitment at the highest political level.

The President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh, participated at this Summit to demonstrate his profound interest in the development and welfare of children and to underline his commitment to the idea of collective international action. Over the past five years, Sierra Leone, for its part, has embarked on a bold and decisive campaign to reduce infant mortality. The percentage of fully immunized children has risen from 6 per cent in 1986 to 24 per cent in 1988 and to 66 per cent in 1990. Our national objective is to achieve universal child immunization by the end of this year.

In the Declaration and Plan of Action they adopted, the Summit leaders essentially acknowledged that the plight of the world's children is largely a reflection of more fundamental global economic and social problems. They recognized that in order to ensure the protection, survival and development of children everywhere, it is necessary to address such issues as the abuse of the environment, the international debt and the enduring economic difficulties experienced by many developing countries.

This is a significant step towards global mobilization against the most pernicious of all problems - the problem of economic underdevelopment. We have reason to hope that, along with progress in disarmament and arms control, the defusing of the cold war will now make it possible to overcome the philosophical and ideological differences that hitherto impeded decisive international action in this area.

(Mr. Koroma, Sierra Leone)

Each year, the agenda of the United Nations has been strong on problems pertaining to economic development, conflict resolution and the advancement of social issues for the improvement of the human condition. Each nation, great and small, has a responsibility for mobilizing the global consciousness necessary for the success of the United Nations.

For many of the countries of the third world, deep in the morass of conflict and poverty, the journey from a rural agrarian environment to a highly literate industrialized society may span many generations. And although it is a journey that is slowly being made by many nations today, it cannot be fully achieved without the sensitivity and assistance of the advanced countries of the North.

We shall continue to make a solemn appeal for all nations, rich and poor, strong and weak, to join in peace and harmony on this journey. This appeal is also being made in full realization of the divine purpose of our creation and the undeniable fact that no man and no nation can completely fulfil its mandate on Earth without an underlying substratum of the eternal.

Mr. TRAORE (Mali) (interpretation from French): Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, I should like to congratulate you whole-heartedly on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. Your personal qualifications as a seasoned diplomat bode well indeed for our work, and my delegation assures you that we stand ready to co-operate to the fullest.

Allow me likewise to convey our deep appreciation, through you, to your distinguished predecessor, General Joseph Garba, and to express our pride in the remarkable way he guided the work of the forty-fourth session.

My delegation pays very special tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for helping to strengthen our Organization and enhance its prestige and for his constant efforts to safeguard international peace and security.

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

The international community has grown by the admission to the Organization of two new Members, namely, Namibia and Liechtenstein. My delegation welcomes those two countries, which will help to bring us closer still to the universalist ideal of the United Nations.

The reunification of Yemen and that of Germany unquestionably reflect the emergence of a new era in international relations and an encouraging development in contemporary thinking. To both those countries, I should like here and now to express the most sincere and warm friendship of the Malian people. Their two examples should spur the international community to encourage divided peoples and nations to regain their unity.

The whole world has had objective reason to welcome the profound changes that occurred in international political relations during the first six months of this year. The process of détente, under way for several years, has gone forward. That new climate has made it possible to approach disarmament matters from a fresh perspective and to seek negotiated solutions to certain regional conflicts.

In Africa, the accession of Namibia to independence on 21 March 1990 was the culmination of long years of sacrifice made by the valiant people of their country.

It is fitting, in this connection, to rejoice at the eminently constructive role played by the United Nations in the effective conduct of the process of decolonizing Namibia.

In South Africa, the freeing of Nelson Mandela, the unbanning of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), of the Communist Party and of numerous other anti-apartheid movements, the dialogue initiated between the ANC and the Government of Frederick de Klerk, the partial lifting of the state of emergency and the freeing of political prisoners are unquestionably very positive developments. While encouraging the ongoing process, we none the less call upon the international

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

community to remain vigilant, so as to induce the Pretoria Government to abolish apartheid totally and thus to speed the advent of a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa. We must not consider lifting the sanctions until the goals embodied in the Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa, adopted by the General Assembly at its sixteenth special session, have been attained.

With regard to Western Sahara, my delegation has taken note of the Secretary-General's report summarizing the implementation of the peace plan devised jointly by the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations, which provides, in particular, for the holding of a general, free and orderly referendum on self-determination.

As to the territorial dispute between Chad and Libya, my delegation welcomes the decision of the two parties to bring the matter before the International Court of Justice and expresses the hope that they will thus arrive at a definitive settlement.

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

For several months now the West African subregion Liberia has been the scene of bloody turmoil in a fratricidal conflict. This civil war has already taken a toll in thousands of lives, including those of nationals from my country. It has done enormous damage to the economic infrastructure and triggered a massive exodus into neighbouring countries.

Mali, always in favour of dialogue and working things out in concert, backed the decisions taken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to settle this tragic problem. We strongly appeal to all the parties to the conflict to show tolerance and a sense of patriotism in striving together to put an end to their dissension and to come to grips with the real problems of the country - national reconstruction and development.

Elsewhere, the people and Government of Mali are delighted at the favourable trend towards a truly peaceful resolution of the crisis that had developed between two fraternal neighbours and partners, namely, Senegal and Mauritania. My delegation is fully aware of what this means and, keen to preserve harmony, cohesion and co-operation in our subregion, reaffirms the readiness of Mali to help further the felicitous outcome to this dispute.

Beyond the African continent the high-level meeting of delegations from North Korea and from South Korea in September bears witness to their manifest determination to achieve the peaceful reunification of the Korean nation. My delegation encourages them to pursue their consultations so as to attain that end, which is in keeping with the spirit of the United Nations Charter and with the evolution of the world political climate.

My delegation notes with satisfaction that the efforts set in train to resolve the Cambodian problem have brought the five permanent members of the Security Council to work out the framework for a peaceful settlement of that conflict. We welcome the acceptance by the various parties directly concerned of the settlement

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

plan and the establishment of a Supreme National Council. We exhort them to go on negotiating so as to be able to put an end to almost two decades of tragedy.

Turning now to the question of Afghanistan, my delegation encourages the Secretary-General of the United Nations to continue to bring his good offices to bear with a view to arriving at a negotiated settlement within the context of the Geneva agreements entered into on 14 August 1988.

The problem of Cyprus is still of concern to Mali. My delegation urges the parties to pursue dialogue so that the modalities of settlement already agreed upon in the 1977 and 1979 agreements, as well as in Security Council resolution 649 (1990), might indeed be implemented. For our part we believe that the sovereignty, unity and non-aligned status of that country must be safeguarded.

The relative calm that had characterized international relations was suddenly upset at the beginning of the month of August by Iraq's aggression against Kuwait. My country, which has always rejected resorting to force in international relations, condemned the invasion of Kuwait and demanded the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi troops from that country. Mali has endorsed all the decisions taken by the Security Council and welcomes the climate of co-operation that has prevailed within the Council during the consideration of this painful issue.

The Gulf crisis has made it possible to highlight the dedication of the international community to respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. For the first time the members of the Council have agreed in condemning aggression, invasion and annexation. This unanimity is a positive reflection of the new climate of confidence now prevailing in international relations. A new page has thus been turned in the history of the United Nations. We sincerely hope to see the effects of this new wind of change continue in the Security Council. Thus, in the name of the principle of non-aggression and respect for the territorial integrity of States, the Security Council will with the same vigour and

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

determination be able to take the appropriate measures to put an end to Israel's occupation of South Lebanon, the Syrian Golan Heights, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem.

It is high time for all the States Members of our Organization to abide by the pertinent resolutions of the Organization so that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East can be held. That Conference, which the international community is so urgently calling for, will enable the peoples of the region at last to know peace. The Palestinian question, which is at the core of the problem of the Middle East, can be settled in a just and lasting way only by the free exercise of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence.

My delegation is aware of the full significance of the progress made in disarmament. In fact, the agreements on chemical weapons entered into at Washington last June came on the heels of previous treaties on the elimination of intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. We hail the agreement in principle won in Vienna on conventional arms and encourage the two super-Powers to pursue their negotiations with a view eventually to entering into a full-fledged agreement on the subject. The considerable resources that could be made available as a result of general and complete disarmament should promote the restoration of growth and development in the developing countries.

The Gulf crisis will have extremely adverse economic and financial consequences for the developing countries that do not produce oil, countries already badly stricken by previous shocks and crises. This will unquestionably mean a further constriction of financial markets and, above all, a considerable cut-back in terms of aid for development.

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

The consequences of those events, compounded by the upheaval that took place in the countries of Eastern Europe, which are now plunged into sweeping structural transformations as they seek better to integrate themselves into the global economy, might lead to exacerbating the marginalization of developing countries in general but especially those in Africa. In most developing countries the debt burden is a major obstacle in the way of development, and there must be a comprehensive approach to the debt crisis.

The various measures taken to lighten external indebtedness, though significant, should be expanded and revised in such a way as to take into account the need for growth and development in the debtor countries. If there is to be a real way out of the external debt problem of developing countries, the international community will have to strengthen solidarity within its ranks in the context of shared responsibility.

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

Urgent measures must be taken to reverse the massive negative transfer of resources from developing to developed countries, for these transfers have contributed to reducing in real terms the volume of official development assistance, thereby creating a serious shortfall in resources earmarked for development programmes.

The drop in commodity prices is yet another source of concern for developing countries. It brings in its wake unpredictability and a steady decline in their export revenues. It reduces the capacity for internal financing of development and exacerbates the difficulties related to debt servicing. It thus becomes a matter of urgency to apply the appropriate solutions to deal with these problems in keeping with the pertinent provisions of the Integrated Programme for Commodities.

The improved international climate, notwitnstanding the Gulf crisis, should prompt the community of States to think further about the establishment of an economic order that would be both equitable and transparent and more compatible with the profound reforms undertaken by the developing countries. The international community should spare no effort to ensure the success of the Uruguay Round of negotiations. These negotiations must overcome the inertia obstructing the transfer of technology and know-how and create the appropriate framework within which to promote the export of manufactured products from the developing countries to the developed nations.

The Preparatory Committee of the Whole, which was entrusted with the preparation of an international strategy for the United Nations fourth development decade, has submitted its report to the General Assembly. The strengthening of multilateralism should enable the international community to give effective expression to the full meaning of the pertinent proposals embodied in that document.

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

The Declaration adopted at the eighteenth special session, on international economic co-operation, in particular the revitalization of economic growth and development in the developing countries, was a signal event in the annals of our Organization.

It is therefore important that the pertinent provisions of the Declaration, which was adopted by consensus by all States Members of the United Nations, not remain a dead letter. This constructive consensus must lead to a global charter of solidarity, thereby reducing the disparities between the developed and developing countries.

The second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which was just concluded, commands the attention of the international community as a whole. The United Nations system and all the partners to the development of the least developed countries must make a substantial contribution to the attainment of the five priorities spelled out in the Programme of Action aimed at stemming the spread of poverty and creating a powerful surge of renewed growth and development in the least developed countries.

By the same token, in their implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Children, just solemnly adopted by the Heads of State or Government, the attention of all States and international and non-governmental organizations must be focused particularly on the proposals regarding the survival, protection and development of children. The future of the world indeed depends on what the present generation is willing to invest in the physical, intellectual and moral health of the generations to come, and the unprecedented success of the World Summit for Children truly augurs well for the future.

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

Notwithstanding the special programme adopted by the United Nations in 1986, economic and social conditions on the African continent have steadily deteriorated year after year. In point of fact, the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, has been seriously hampered by an adverse international economic environment. The plummeting prices of Africa's export products, the exacerbation of the external debt crisis, the lessening of capital flows in terms of official development aid, and the inverse transfer of financial resources from Africa to the developed countries have deprived Africans of the wherewithal needed to implement their development programmes.

Moreover, despite the positive results recorded in terms of structural adjustment programmes, the application of these policies and programmes has contributed in many countries to increased unemployment, decreasing expenditures in such essential sectors as health and education and the marginalization of a large sector of the population, thereby heightening social tension.

Far from being reversed and overcome, the marginalization of the African continent is becoming entrenched, given the new configurations in the international economic structures and the emergence of huge economic entities in Europe and North America.

Hence, Africa's stark economic situation calls for a specific response from the international community and for efforts by the African countries themselves with a view to speeding up their economic integration in line with the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action.

The systems of production and consumption that have so far prevailed in the world, especially in the industrialized countries, have brought our planet to the verge of an ecological catastrophe. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, to be held in 1992, will give the international community an

(Mr. Traore, Mali)

exceptional opportunity to resolve the serious environmental problems. Mali, a country hard hit by the adverse impact of drought and desertification, attaches great importance to the success of the Conference. Mindful of this circumstance, my country will be hosting in December the African Conference on environment and sustainable development.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm that our Organization is duty-bound to strive tirelessly to strengthen international peace and security, to work towards the revitalization of growth and development in the developing countries, to eradicate hunger and poverty in the world and to preserve the environment, the common heritage of mankind. Our generation has already become aware of all the harmful and diverse pressures man has exerted on nature and of the need for a new social interaction the world over.

If peace, harmony and a readiness for greater mutual understanding and co-operation among all nations throughout the world are indeed permanent priorities, there can be no doubt that we can in fact give tangible expression to that noble ideal of the United Nations: the well-being of all mankind.

Mr. NDINGA-OBA (Congo) (interpretation from French): The convening of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly gives me an opportunity to pay a tribute to the efforts recently made by our world Organization and by the international community as a whole to establish a climate of peace in the world and to promote the virtues of dialogue and mediation. Indeed, the search for peace and the willingness to engage in a dialogue have been an ongoing preoccupation with regard to relations between States. Thanks to those efforts, numerous conflicts have been ended and the climate of dialogue, which until recently did not exist, has been established throughout the world. We are therefore seeing the dawn of a new era, a more promising one, in which dialogue and joint efforts will prevail over confrontation. Never in the post-war period has the climate of international relations been so favourable, despite the regrettable presence of some hotbeds of tension. Never in the history of humanity has such significant progress been achieved in such a short time by States; this is proof of their capacity to act constructively in the search for solutions to the vital problems in our universe and also their capacity to meet the numerous challenges facing us.

It is in this global context of peace and understanding among nations that I would like, on behalf of the Congolese delegation and on my own behalf, to congratulate you, Sir, most sincerely on your unanimous election to the presidency of our General Assembly at its forty-fifth session. Your outstanding qualities, as well as the esteem and the consideration which you enjoy in the international community, are sure guarantees of the success of the present session.

May I also pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Joseph Garba, your predecessor, for the dynamism, clarity and firmness with which he guided the debate of the forty-fourth session.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

Finally, we wish to congratulate Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, our Secretary-General, for all his efforts to strengthen the role of the United Nations and to create the conditions necessary for the establishment of peace in the world.

We should like, first of all, to warmly welcome the delegation of Liechtenstein, which has just been admitted as the 160th State Member of the United Nations. In adhering to the Charter, that country is strengthening the universality of the Organization and reinforcing the principle that the United Nations is based on the sovereign equality of all its Members. The People's Republic of the Congo, which spares no effort in contributing to the peaceful solution of conflicts and the strengthening of détente in the world, has welcomed with real satisfaction Namibia's accession to independence. We pay a tribute to its admission to the United Nations. My delegation takes this opportunity once again to assure Namibia, the youngest democracy on our continent, of our availability and complete co-operation both multilaterally and bilaterally.*

The annual gathering of the representatives of the States all over the world always affords a favourable occasion to think about the relationships among nations. Clearly, the goals enunciated in the Charter of the United Nations have not yet been fully achieved, but because of the climate of détente that prevails at the present time we can hope and believe that the conditions are there for the establishment of an era of peace and true co-operation among States.

We all know that the quest for peace is a sacred cause. Thus it is appropriate that we should devote all our energies and our good will to it because it requires determination and persistence. Undoubtedly there will be moments of

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* Mr. Thompson (Fiji), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

despair, when tensions flare up or subside, but we know that our unending work is a collective effort and it can only progress if all Member States are mobilized. Therefore it is with the same determination and the same hopes that we must deal with various conflicts and ease the hotbeds of tension that break out in different areas.

My country appreciates the positive attitude we have recently seen in the efforts made by the United Nations to resolve the serious crisis in the Gulf, which was caused by the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq. The vital need for the commitment of Member States to the ideals of the United Nations could not be demonstrated more clearly, especially their commitment to respect for international law, which protects the weak against the strong and guarantees international security and stability. In this unending quest for peace, the Congo, like other countries, welcomes the fact that the United Nations - this voice which has often been heard crying in the wilderness - has now, as the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization emphasizes, "gained a volume and resonance it lacked before". (A/45/1, p. 2)

The tangible progress in East-West détente has dispelled the communist spectre of another course of action. This progress now causes less apprehension as regards the idea of restructuring the world and day by day dispels the fear of a recurrence of a dreadful past. While the search for peace has been of concern to the international community, profound changes are also taking place in the world that clearly show the lofty aspirations of peoples to enjoy greater democracy and freedom. A vibrant new chapter and a true political turning-point occurred in Europe on 3 October 1990, when Germany regained its sovereignty as one State, and with it the right to participate in a military alliance of its choice. The Congo warmly pays a tribute to Germany, a country with which we are bound by many ties of friendship and co-operation.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

Similar expressions of national claims in the heart of Europe have removed the apparently fixed centralized political structures. The winds of freedom have blown over Eastern and Central Europe.

My country appreciates also the unification of the two Yemens and supports the initiatives taken by North Korea and South Korea with a view to their reunification without any foreign interference.

In Africa the process is not an insignificant occurrence. The movement towards greater freedom and democratization of political life also affects African societies. The establishment of free institutions has become a universal aspiration. It remains for each people to find the capacity to organize and to adapt those changes to its own level of development and in accordance with its own cultural values.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

To mark its commitment to democratic values and respect for human rights, the Government of the People's Republic of the Congo has released all political prisoners. Similarly, the Central Committee of the Congolese Labour Party, under the direction of President Denis Sassou Nguesso, in response to the aspirations of the Congolese people to freedom and democracy, decided, at the end of its fourth special session - which was held at Brazzaville from 28 to 30 September 1990 - immediately to set up a multi-party system to allow for greater public participation in the management of public affairs. The various measures taken have already strengthened the prospects for this, especially the starting of work on amendments to the Constitution and the preparation of laws on political parties and on freedom of movement and freedom of expression, guaranteed the leaders of the various schools of thought.

In our country, where over 90 per cent of the relevant age group goes to school and where there are noteworthy traditions in the areas of literacy and cultural and artistic activity, the measures which have just been adopted to guarantee strict respect for individual and collective freedoms will give democracy wider scope and develop it on the basis of the immense work our country has done in this area. Everyone knows that the Congo is one of those countries which attach fundamental importance to the notion of education for all, because to educate a people is to prepare it to assume responsibility for its destiny and provide it with the knowledge and critical mind needed to exercise democracy.

On this soil, fertilized by the ideas of progress and openness to the problems of the world - as we can see from the considerable number of international conferences held in Brazzaville - poets, historians, men of letters, theatre people and talented researchers disseminate, in their works, ideas to improve self-awareness and knowledge of the national and international political, economic

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

and socio-cultural environments. Thus equipped, young people, women and workers in the city and in the countryside long ago organized themselves into associations to make their voices heard in the quest for solutions to our country's problems and to defend their interests.

Today we are witnessing a flowering of the values which are likely to stimulate private initiative, especially in the economic field, where the liberalization measures in force for some years now have created a favourable framework for domestic and foreign private investment. These measures will lend greater vitality to the democratic values which are already rooted in all strata of society in my country.

This is how the new era is beginning. Because of the contribution made by each and every Congolese, and with the support of our partners in the international community, the Congo will give itself a new political landscape which will favour the harmonious development of the country and the well-being of its peoples. The Congo, by using all the energies, freedoms and talents of all its sons and daughters, should make democracy a factor in the country's development.

May this work be carried out in national peace and concord, because that is the wish of its peoples; may it take place without the process now under way being threatened by the adjustment measures, which have been undertaken in an adverse international economic context and which can only be measured in terms of high social costs and political instability. Despite the difficulties which characterize any human endeavour and the scale of the challenge the Congo must meet, the process is irreversible. It is following its course in a climate of regained national peace and cohesion.

Now that the walls and ancient barriers left by the Second World War are falling, we are witnessing and participating in the rise of a new era where confrontation is giving way to dialogue and joint efforts, an era where States are

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

ceasing to see the world, determine their priorities and take certain actions viewed through the warped lens of the cold war, happily now broken. Because the world is gradually freeing itself of the balance of terror, of the feared face-off between the military blocs, the effects are being felt in the most distant lands and in situations which were once set in stone. A previous speaker from this rostrum rightly hailed the end of the East-West conflict as a victory for reason and the sense of responsibility.

The Congo has welcomed the fortunate conclusions of the Soviet-American summits, particularly the declarations concerning strategic arms reductions, the protocols on ending nuclear tests and the agreement to reduce chemical-weapon stockpiles. The Congo is also happy that several issues in international affairs are now being looked at in a new light. The issue of security in Europe is benefiting strongly from the unification of Germany and a context which is finally truly pan-European.

In South Africa, Nelson Mandela, the world's most famous political prisoner, was set free on 11 February 1990. This was redress for a flagrant injustice and, at the same time, a significant victory in the African peoples' struggle for peace and for human liberty and dignity, but also for the universal resistance against oppression. We are convinced that Nelson Mandela will use his great wisdom and rich fund of experience in the service of peace in his country, and for the triumph of those ideals for which our Organization has always selflessly worked.

While it is true that talks between Nelson Mandela, Vice-President of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), and the South African Government with a view to negotiating a non-racial, democratic South Africa have begun and are continuing, it is regrettable that the five pillars of apartheid remain intact and that the conditions needed for a favourable new political climate have scarcely

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been created in South African society. Today, it is more necessary than ever before to mobilize the international community and further increase awareness of the need to keep up sanctions of all kinds against the Pretoria régime so that the apartheid system can finally be eradicated.

In Angola and in Mozambique, direct negotiations between the Government and the opposition must be encouraged and supported. This is true also of all the initiatives towards restoring peace in Liberia. My country also supports the peace processes under United Nations auspices now under way in Western Sahara and in Cambodia.

In the Middle East, the Palestinian people is continuing its difficult quest for its rights to be recognized and for its identity to be affirmed. Even while the world's attention is riveted on the Gulf crisis, the Palestinian question persists, threatening stability and security in the subregion. The Congo remains convinced that only an international conference held under United Nations auspices and with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), would reach a negotiated, just and lasting solution.

Despite everything, the cause of peace moves forward, and our Assembly is good witness to that. The cause of peace progresses through multilateral and bilateral dialogue, through the will of States to renounce war in settling disputes, through the actions of the United Nations wherever it is called upon to mediate. The Congo intends to involve itself fully in this constantly renewed project, and in doing so it will play its appropriate part.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

Unfortunately, this work of peace cannot be separated from the struggle against the disparities which characterize the world. We should ensure that world growth is better shared and more balanced and is directed more towards the elimination of poverty in countries feebly endowed by nature, battered by history or weighed down by debt.

The external-debt question remains fundamental, despite the constant study it has received at both the national and the international levels. We fully appreciate all the decisions taken so far with a view to solving the problem. Nevertheless, the international community must continue to recognize that the debt burden of the developing countries is becoming heavier and heavier. Indeed, from $600 billion at the beginning of the decade, it will reach $1,246 billion at the end of this year.

As far as Africa is concerned, the figures are just as striking: $250 billion in 1990 as compared with $230 billion in 1989. It is true that the volume of African debt is smaller, but it should be pointed out that the debt and the debt-servicing ratios have increased much more quickly than in any other group of countries. In comparison with the gross national product, for example, the debt ratio of the sub-Saharan African countries is almost twice as high as that of countries of the world which are heavily in debt. External debt clearly is a real obstacle to the continent's economic recovery and development. It hinders all development efforts, especially those the African countries are undertaking to improve their own infrastructures, notably in the areas of health and education.

The international community is certainly concerned, although the measures adopted so far have proved insufficient in view of the scope of the crisis. In this regard, the new initiatives for the reduction of debt are of interest to us, especially the recent decision, taken at the summit meeting of the Heads of State of France and Africa held last June in La Baule, in France, in favour of the

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middle-income countries, including Congo. However, my delegation believes it essential to consider the relevant suggestions in the common African position on the indebtedness crisis. These suggestions deserve more attention by the international community.

Furthermore, this effort to achieve a final settlement of Africa's external-debt crisis requires energetic and bold decisions within the framework of a strategy based on co-operation, negotiation and collective responsibility. For the implementation of such a strategy, Africa has proposed to the international community the convening of an international conference on the African debt.

Without any doubt, there are many challenges, which will be difficult to meet unless massive and effective support is given by the international community.

Over and above the external debt crisis, which has been worsened by the reverse flow of capital from the developing countries to the developed countries, the renewal of growth in developing countries is still accompanied by the constant lowering of the prices of raw materials. Indeed, the fall in export income, which is the main resource of developing countries, is compromising the whole outlook for development. For that reason, my country has been following with much interest the Uruguay Round of negotiations, which is scheduled to be completed at the end of this year. A positive outcome of those negotiations would mark the beginning of a new era of global co-operation, with an increased awareness of mutual interests and of the responsibilities shared by all nations.

The persistent worsening of the critical economic and social situation in Africa led the General Assembly in 1986 to reorient the joint efforts of the international community towards an international covenant between Africa and the rest of the world. Its goal was to free that region from its plight and to set it firmly on the road to economic recovery and development. Subsequently the United

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 was adopted.*

Without anticipating the evaluation planned for the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, one may easily observe that, five years after the implementation of the Programme of Action, the economic and social situation of the African countries has worsened. The economic forecasts provide a sombre and unpromising outlook as regards the drastic reform and adjustment measures at present under way. Therefore the international community must help the African countries reduce the human cost of adjustment and must commit itself to the establishment of external conditions favourable to the resumption of growth and development. This is an urgent and decisive matter. Africa is determined, in this context, to pursue these reforms, which can help it to reverse its disastrous economic and social decline.

Today we must have a new, constructive vision which makes possible a restructuring of the world economic system. For that reason we hail the conclusions of the work of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, which was devoted to international co-operation, and more particularly to the growth of the developing countries. That work has made it possible to envisage specific measures likely to achieve more balanced international economic relations.

In the same spirit, my country welcomes the recent adoption of the new International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. This new framework of co-operation should make it possible to redress the imbalances in the international economic system and to promote a fair and equitable sharing of the heritage of mankind. Otherwise, the détente we are now experiencing

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* The President returned to the Chair.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

will be fragile and tenuous if it does not open up genuine prospects for the developing countries' development and progress.

Environmental problems affect our entire planet. Many speakers have mentioned this important subject and have referred to its many aspects, such as water pollution, air pollution, the progressive depletion of the ozone layer, soil degradation, deforestation, desertification, the excessive destruction of numerous rare species and, more recently, the overt or covert attempts to dump toxic wastes in Africa.

We must consider the struggle against environmental degradation as being an integral part of the struggle that the international community must carry on to revitalize economic growth and development. For that reason, Congo has welcomed the scheduled convening in 1992 in Brazil of the international Conference on Environment and Development. We are convinced that that Conference will contribute to the examination and adoption of the necessary provisions of a world strategy for environmental survival.

Independently of the results expected from that Conference, my country has for several years now had a specific governmental structure for environmental matters, and has proclaimed 6 March as "National Tree Day". At the same time, it has drafted an environment code that is strict in terms of the standards it defines and the sanctions it calls for. Moreover, in keeping with its commitment, Congo this year acted as host to a conference on the conservation of forest ecosystems in the Central African region. In view of the need to strengthen co-operation to safeguard the ecosystems, the conference adopted a regional plan of action which, inter alia, seeks to protect our forest heritage, to strengthen the technical equipment and forest legislation to limit the destruction of protected species, and also to provide for the training of personnel.

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

While the industrial countries have been enjoying uninterrupted growth for eight years, the majority of the developing countries have been stagnating or even falling back. Analysts agree that extreme poverty is rampant among 4 billion people at the same time as 800 million people are bathing in abundance.

Poverty, a source of tension within our societies and beyond our frontiers, is assailing the developing countries, with its attendant woes of malnutrition, sickness and illiteracy, but it does not spare the idustrialized world, which has its own social disparities. The decade of the 1980s, now coming to an end, is leaving the developing world a legacy of more than 1 billion people living in absolute poverty, and our African continent remains its favourite target. Indeed, conditions in Africa are such that in years to come we may see there a dangerously explosive situation, both socially and politically, as was recently emphasized by an eminent person from the Commission of European Communities. The international community cannot remain indifferent to that situation. An urgent response must be provided.

Terrorism is one of the most deplorable phenomena of the century which is now nearing its close. No country is safe from it. For that reason, it is in everybody's interest to join forces and relentlessly fight terrorist acts, whether carried out by organized groups or by individuals. The Congo, which has been stricken more than once by terrorist madness, recently erected a monument in memory of the 49 Congolese victims of the explosion of the DC-10 aircraft owned by Union de Transports Aériennes (UTA) in September 1989. Henceforth, 19 May will be known in the Congo as the "Day of Struggle against Terrorism".

Africa, hitherto spared, has now become a target of illicit drug trafficking and drug abuse. The fatal effects of that scourge now afflict every society, rich

(Mr. Ndinga-Oba, Congo)

or poor. The Congo takes this opportunity to renew its commitment to the conclusions of the last special session of the General Assembly, devoted to drugs, and once again appeals to the international community to give Africa the necessary technical and financial assistance to halt that scourge.

It is reassuring to note that at the dawn of the hope-filled third millennium the world is undergoing profound changes, but those changes would be meaningless without an affirmation of the international community's collective awareness of the common destiny of all peoples and all States. More than any other organization, the United Nations has been able to embody the principle of universality; within our Organization, nations can act together to take up the major challenges of the modern world and maintain unity and solidarity with one another. By co-operating within the United Nations, our nations and peoples will have honoured their commitment to the Charter. They will thus have worked for the rapprochement of men and peoples whose legitimate aspiration is to live in harmony in a world of peace, democracy, justice and social progress.

That is why today everyone is looking with optimism and hope to our Organization at this last session of the 1980s.

The PRESIDENT: Owing to an omission in the Journal, Angola was not listed as the last speaker in the general debate for this morning. I should like to inform members that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Angola, Mr. Pedro de Castro Van-Dunem, will be the first speaker this afternoon and the last speaker in the general debate for this session.

Item 154, "Electoral assistance to Haiti", scheduled for this morning, will be taken up this afternoon as soon as the report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/45/L.2 is available.

(The President)

As the general debate in the General Assembly draws to a close, I wish to express my appreciation of the co-operation which has been extended for the successful conduct of our proceedings. This year our schedule of work was unusually heavy because of the impressive number of Heads of State or Government who wished to address the Assembly. Some dislocation of work was therefore inevitable, though I believe that it was kept to the absolute minimum.

Unfortunately, it has to be acknowledged that one of the more long-standing problems causing some delay in our proceedings has not yet been overcome. This concerns the delays to the start of meetings owing to the late arrival of some representatives. The waiver of quorum requirements offers only a partial solution to this problem. On a number of occasions I still felt bound by the requirements of courtesy and common sense to delay inviting the first speaker to the podium, even though he and I were ready to begin on time, because only a limited number of delegations were seated at their places in the General Assembly Hall.

Following in the footsteps of many of my predecessors, I am therefore once again inviting delegations to make every effort to ensure the timely seating of their representatives in the Assembly, so that in future, meetings may regularly begin as scheduled.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.